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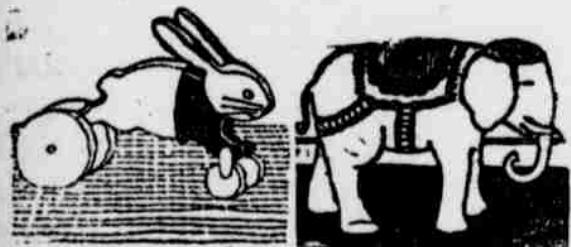
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Romance and James

By DORA MOLLAN

(© 1921, by McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

James Manning was in love with two girls at the same time. If you can imagine a worse predicament for a young man who is both shy and conscientious—I can't. James belonged to the serious, good-looking type. He was dark almost to swarthy. Back of him, undoubtedly, was an Italian ancestor, but very well plastered over with New England's reserve. Stick your finger down through the crust of Puritan constraint and there was a bubbling well of romance in James.

First, there was Miss Merritt in the office—and right here we must own up that there was a flaw in the dark eyes of our hero—he was a trifle near-sighted and would not wear glasses. Still it was not entirely due to that unfortunate fact that Miss Merritt had worked within ten feet of James for a month before he discovered what a really nice girl she was.

She was so negative in appearance that one missed her fine points at first. The highest paid writer on "Advice to business women" could but have approved of her dress. Spectacles, yellow tinged, gave her eyes a greenish tint. Her light brown hair was severely coiffured and cheeks were guiltless of color, either natural or naturalized.

First accidentally, and then intentionally, James formed the habit of walking with Miss Merritt to the corner, where, after business hours, she took her car. It followed as a matter of course that he called. Then he came regularly twice a week. Sitting in the dim gas light of the stiff boarding house parlor, their conversation ranged from the latest increase in trol-



It Began by His Passing the Salt.

ley fares to the League of Nations. James decided that Miss Merritt was a most sensible young woman and all his sober judgment could wish for.

But there were evenings when sober judgment and James had nothing to do with each other, when the desire for romance bubbled up through the cracks of his reserve like the luscious juice of a huckleberry pie is apt to do even when concocted by the most careful of cooks. But of these evenings he spoke not at all to Miss Merritt.

Then James would lie himself to a Bohemian tea room much frequented by fashionably gowned young women. Over the supper he would revel in the life and gaiety of his surroundings without ever joining in, though the way was made easy for him as it always is for lone young men of interesting appearance. Then a picture featuring some beautiful star would lure him. Afterward James would return to his room with a deep-drawn sigh that he was but a spectator at the romance of life.

That is, he did until the night he met Pauline. Colorful Pauline! Pauline of the big blue eyes and wonderful marcelled hair, softly pink as to cheeks, vividly red as to lips, with a kippy little close-fitting hat and beguiling veil. With skirt (James decided with a blush that the plural of that word could not be used in describing Pauline's apparel) not too far below the knees, and filmy blouse, generous in the matter of revealing her fine white skin, covered by the luxurious fur wrap which fastened up to the spot where in the memory of oldish men, girls used to wear their ears, Pauline had floated into the tea-room, and after a leisurely glance around, had calmly seated herself opposite to James.

It began by his passing her the salt and ended by his taking her to see his favorite film star. Somewhere early in the evening James had ventured to mention his name, and Pauline had murmured softly but without the least hesitation, "shall I call you Jimmie?" "And I—you?" questioned James eagerly.

"Call me Pauline," she answered. "Pauline," echoed James. Unbidden there came the mental picture of another girl—a girl who wore shell-rimmed spectacles and severely plain clothes, who never used his given name, though they had been friends

for months. Miss Merritt's first name was Pauline, too.

It passed, that evening, like a rapturous dream. They parted in front of the theater, Pauline insisting that "Jimmie" leave her there, hinting mysteriously at reasons why. Yes, she would try to slip away on the same evening of the following week. And she did.

So it went on for a month. Pauline grew more and more beguiling, and lost nothing of the air of mystery which concealed her identity as completely as the fur-trimmed wrap concealed her figure, and meanwhile Miss Merritt grew more interesting and companionable.

Came a Sunday when the temperature fell into the icy arms of the arctic winds, and that part of James' Italian ancestor within him crawled down into the depths of his nature and fell fast asleep. But his Puritan principles were right in their element. They decided that never, no never, would James be happy with anyone as frivolous as Pauline. It was in this frame of mind that James went to call on Miss Merritt that evening.

That seventh sense, which warns all women when a man is about to propose, was on the job, and Miss Merritt's reply was prompt.

"Mr. Manning," she said calmly, "are you sure you would rather marry me than any other woman in the world? I will leave you for 20 minutes, then I shall return and ask you the same question again."

James Manning gazed at the door through which Miss Merritt had passed until the sound of her footsteps ceased. He hid his face in his hands. How did she know? Then deep within him something stirred and there came a great longing for Pauline—Pauline who, soft and fragrant and elusive in her luxurious garments, typified all that Miss Merritt lacked. He would find her. He would take her in his arms and tell her how he loved her. James raised his head, stood up, stretched out his arms involuntarily to the vision—and some one entered the room and walked straight into them!

"Would you rather marry me than any other woman in the world, Jimmie?" The voice came with muffled sweetness from James' shoulder. Utterly confused, supremely happy, while at the same time loathing himself for his vacillation, James answered, "Yes, dear."

Pauline drew away from James' embrace. She removed the kippy little hat and the beguiling veil, slid out of the enveloping wrap and from somewhere produced a pair of shell-rimmed spectacles. Putting them on she looked at the bewildered-to-the-point-of-speechlessness James. His eyes roved helplessly back and forth from the girl to the discarded garments.

Pauline Merritt laughed merrily. "It's as simple as this, Jimmie James. A wealthy cousin of mine was married last month. She sent me all her old clothes. And as for these"—touching the shell-rimmed glasses—"why, they are a penalty for having gone without too long."

"But I loved you both!" James seemed to be demanding of himself the answer to the puzzle, but Pauline gave it.

"Why put it in the past tense, Jimmie James? Most men are bigamists at heart," she said.

Commissioners' Notice.

In the matter of the estate of Ida L. Soule, deceased.

We, the undersigned, having been appointed by the Hon. Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate in and for the County of Shiawassee, State of Michigan, Commissioners to receive, examine and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against said estate, do hereby give notice that we will meet at the residence of Bert Sweetland, in the Township of Caledonia, in said county, on Monday, the 30th day of January, A. D. 1922, and on Wednesday, the 29th day of March, A. D. 1922, at ten o'clock in the forenoon of each of said days, for the purpose of receiving and adjusting all claims against said estate, and that four months from the 29th day of November, A. D. 1921, are allowed to creditors to present their claims to said Commissioners for adjustment and allowance.

Dated the 28th day of November, A. D. 1921.

BERT SWEETLAND,
Commissioner

Order of Publication.

State of Michigan—The Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee.

At a session of the Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee, held at the Probate Office in the City of Corunna, on Tuesday, the 29th day of November, in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one.

Present—Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate.

In the matter of the estate of John Schneider, deceased.

On reading and filing the petition of William Schneider praying that administration of said estate may be granted to some suitable person.

It is Ordered, That the 26th day of January next at ten o'clock in the forenoon, at said Probate Office, be assigned for hearing said petition.

And it is Further Ordered, That a copy of this order be published three successive weeks previous to said day of hearing, in The Owosso Times, a newspaper printed and circulating in said County of Shiawassee.

MATTHEW BUSH,
Judge of Probate.

By CLARET GALLOWAY,
Probate Register.

FOR CHRISTMAS

There is nothing more appropriate than a gift which every month throughout the year, brings a pleasant reminder of the donor. For this purpose THE OPEN ROAD has not only proved its popularity but comes well recommended. Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President-Emeritus of Harvard University and noted educator, says:

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MODERN DAY MIRACLES

Goethe, the Great German Poet, Visits Saarbrücken Forest and Discovers the Philosopher of Coal

(Told in Eight Sketches)
By JOHN RAYMOND

No. III

THE PHILOSOPHER OF COAL

In 1771, there lived in the forest near Saarbrücken, in Germany, a chemist named Stauf. He was an eccentric old man who had an idea, far ahead of his times, that many things beside coke could be obtained in the combustion of bituminous coal.

Stauf had constructed a number of ovens over a burning mine and treated coal so that he obtained oil, pitch, coke and soot. That was quite a forward step and although he lived in the depths of a forest the great minds of Europe heard of his work. In fact, Goethe, himself made a pilgrimage to the ovens of the far-seeing chemist and in his autobiography wrote a striking comment on his visit to the Saarbrücken forest:

"Ready and glad to pour his complaints into a human ear, the lean decrepit, little man, with a shoe on one foot and a slipper on the other, and with stockings hanging down and repeatedly pulled up in vain, dragged himself up the mountain to where the pitch house stood which he had built himself and saw with grief now falling into ruins. Here was found a connected row of ovens in which coal was to be freed from sulphur and made fit for use in the iron works; but at the same time they wished also to recover the oil and pitch, and indeed, did not want to lose the lamp black, so that all failed together on account of the many ends in view."

Goethe, who dubbed the chemist of Saarbrücken "Kohlenphilosoph" or the Philosopher of Coal, wrote his commentary less than a century and a half ago. What would be his comment today could he enter one of the great

American plants where almost unlimited numbers of products are obtained from the distillation or partial combustion of coal.

Stauf certainly was one of the pioneers, but it appears that the Chinese used coke as an article of commerce more than 2,000 years ago, own chemical industry.

(Released by The Institute of American Business, New York)



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